



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Robert F. McDonnell
Governor

August 13, 2010

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Gates:

I join with the mayors of the Virginia localities that are adversely affected by the announced closure of the United States Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) by the Department of Defense in expressing my personal disappointment with the manner in which this decision was made and announced.

When I was appointed to the Council of Governors, it was for the purpose of establishing an open and continuous dialogue with the Secretary of Defense, with transparency in the exchange of ideas. The decision relating to the closure of USJFCOM was not taken as a result of open dialogue and transparency in the decision making process.

The decision to close USJFCOM will result in the loss of approximately 10,000 jobs in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. The proposal by the Department of Defense is a significant base realignment and closure action that must be treated as such. The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) legislation has been established by the Congress to ensure that sufficient time and opportunity is available for review of such proposals in an open and transparent manner. In addition, the BRAC process ensures that such critical base infrastructure closure and realignment decisions are made only after a complete review, without political interference, and within the national strategic framework.

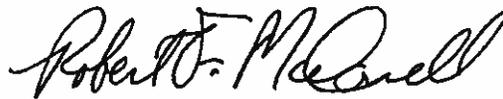
Furthermore, as a retired member of the United States military, I am struck by the fact that this closure is not a part of the recommendations contained in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, which requires an assessment of the threats and challenges and a rebalancing of strategies, capabilities and forces to address those threats that are both near and long term. At a time when this country is actively engaged in fighting on two fronts, joint interoperability among the military branches is absolutely critical and requires considerable coordination among the services. The ability to engage in multiple engagements as a joint force has always been a hallmark of military strength of the United States. USJFCOM develops and trains the expertise required by the military to orchestrate its forces to operate jointly in what remains a very dangerous and threatening world. Now is simply not the time to engage in reducing the war fighting capabilities of the United States military by reducing the resources required by the military to execute the mission assignments of this nation.

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I, therefore, join the mayors in urging that you reconsider this decision and recommendation taken outside the BRAC process. The BRAC process, as the law of the land pertinent to this type of action, must be followed so that the significant economic impact of the JFCOM closure on the local communities and the Commonwealth as a whole may be appropriately considered. In addition, I would like to meet with you and senior members of your staff, both personally and with key members of my staff, regarding this closure so that an open and transparent dialogue can be established with you and your staff.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert F. McDonnell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Robert F. McDonnell

RFM/tls